

## **The Personalized Handgun Safety Act of 2013**

### **A Solution Both Gun Owners and Gun Safety Advocates Should Embrace**

*“Thousands of lives could be saved each year if gun personalization technology became the law of the land,” wrote New York Times columnist Joe Nocera on March 23, 2012.”*

In the most recent James Bond film, Bond escapes death when his handgun, which is equipped with technology that recognizes him as its owner, becomes inoperable when it gets into the wrong hands. This technology, however, isn't just for the movies – it's a reality. Technology currently exists to make handguns “personalized” and to ensure that they are only operable by authorized users. This technology presents a modern solution to the persistent problem of gun violence that is in the interest of, and should be embraced by, gun owners and safety advocates alike.

Personalization technology allows the purchaser of a gun to designate authorized user(s) who can operate the gun and would make the gun inoperable for all others. This would disallow criminals who steal handguns to be able to use them and would decrease accidental gun deaths significantly.

Personalized handguns are already being sold overseas and several gun manufacturers plan to introduce this technology to the American market this summer. In the late 1990s, then-President Bill Clinton initiated grants to develop such technology. More recently, in response to the tragic school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, President Obama issued an executive order directing the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) to conduct a study on the state of gun personalization technology.

Fifteen years ago, a boy in my district named Brian Crowell was visiting his best friend's home. It was Christmas Eve. Just before Brian was about to leave to head home for dinner, his best friend was playing with his mom's handgun and accidentally shot Brian in the neck. Brian died shortly thereafter. His mother, Ann Marie, has said there will always be a hole in their family and her son was never be able to go to the prom, graduate from high school, marry and potentially become a father himself. For Brian and for the thousands of others who die from the unauthorized use of a handgun, we must implement sensible gun safety measures. The Personalized Handgun Safety Act of 2013 does precisely that.

Specifically, the Personalized Handgun Safety Act of 2013 would mandate that all newly manufactured handguns are personalized and can only be operated by authorized users. It also would provide for grants through the NIJ to continue to develop and improve handgun personalization technology to simultaneously increase efficacy and decrease cost. This technology would protect law enforcement officers from having their guns used against them, would protect gun owners whose guns are stolen from being used in a crime, and would protect children and teenagers, like Brian Crowell, whose life was taken accidentally.

The Personalized Handgun Safety Act of 2013 would:

- Authorize grants, to be administered through NIJ, for further development and improvement of personalized handgun technology.
- Direct the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to create a safety standard for personalized handguns that all newly manufactured handguns will have to meet.
- Require that all handguns manufactured in the United States two years after the date of enactment of the bill be “personalized handguns” and comply with the CPSC standard.
- Require that any entity, whether an individual or business, selling a handgun, retrofit their handgun with personalization technology three years after the date of enactment of the bill. The retrofitting shall be paid for out of the Asset Forfeiture Fund at the Department of Justice. Cash confiscated by the Department of Justice, and proceeds from the sale of other confiscated property, is deposited into this Asset Forfeiture Fund, which is used to retrofit vehicles for law enforcement purposes, pay rewards to informants in illicit drug cases, and pay overtime, travel, and training expenses for state and local law enforcement personnel who assist the Department of Justice in forfeiture cases.
- Hold gun manufacturers liable if they produce guns that do not meet the CPSC safety standard two years after the passage of the bill.